

# Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria

The Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria provide criteria to help cities and counties make Findings related to the urban level of flood protection before entering into a development agreement for a property; approving a discretionary permit or entitlement for any property development or use, or approving a ministerial permit that would result in construction of a new residence; or approving a tentative map/parcel map for a subdivision (see California Government Code Sections 65865.5, 65962, and 66474.5). The Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria are incorporated by reference into the Public Draft 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as part of the floodplain management planning effort under the FloodSAFE California Initiative, has developed **Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria**. The draft criteria were developed in response to the requirements from the Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008, enacted by Senate Bill 5, to promote prudent development in floodplains. The urban level of flood protection is defined as follows:

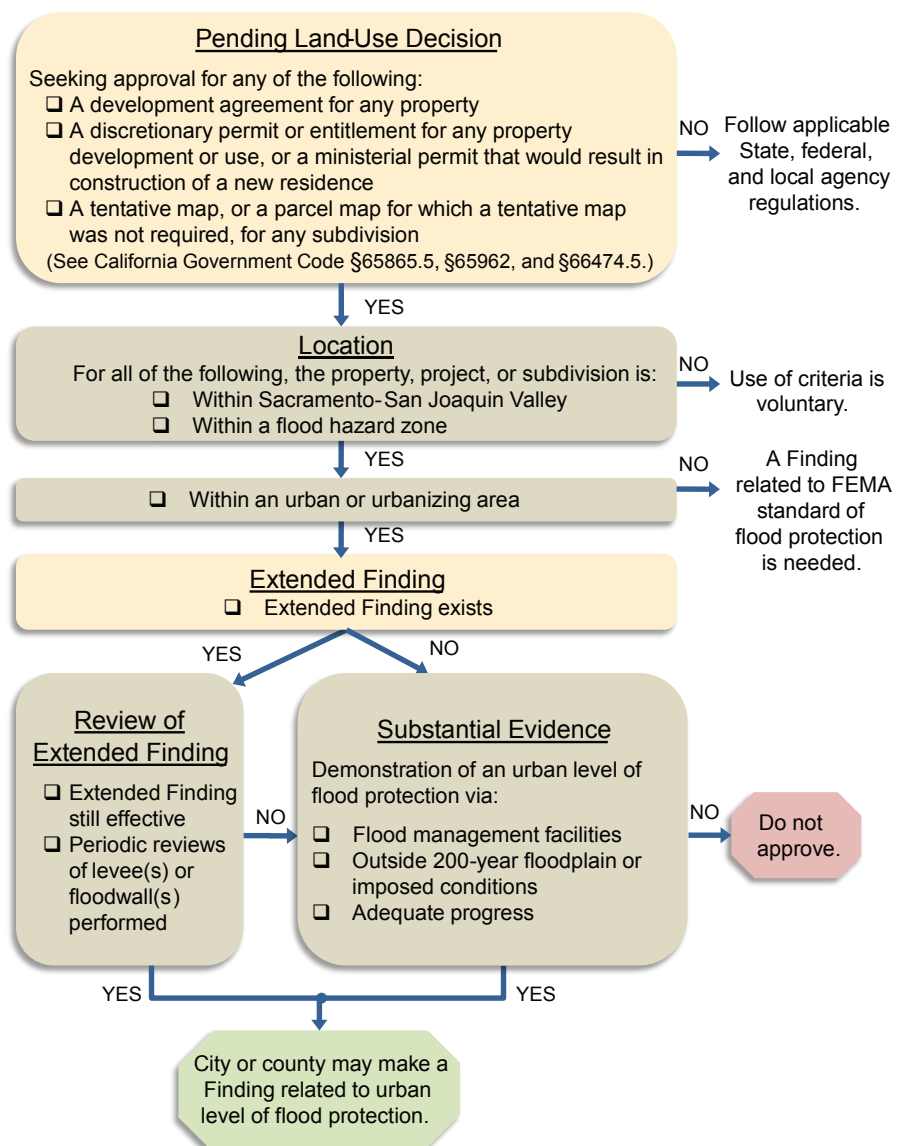
*“Urban level of flood protection” means the level of protection that is necessary to withstand flooding that has a 1-in-200 chance of occurring in any given year using criteria consistent with, or developed by, the Department of Water Resources (California Government Code §65007(l)).*

DWR developed the draft criteria with input from a work group of representatives from cities, counties, other State and federal agencies, and associated professional organizations.

## Criteria Organization

As shown in the flow chart to the right, three specific land use decisions are affected by this law. To approve these land use decisions, cities and counties may use the criteria that DWR developed. The criteria are designed to be evaluated in a conditional sequence. The conclusion reached when evaluating one criterion affects which, if any, subsequent criteria should be considered.

The draft criteria, which incorporate existing practices when available, were developed to reduce the burdens of



Flow chart for making findings related to an urban level of flood protection

these new requirements on cities and counties while providing reasonable assurance of protection from flooding with a 1-in-200 annual chance of occurrence. A more detailed flow chart and description of the draft criteria are provided in the document titled, *Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria*.

## Urban Levee Design Criteria

Pertinent engineering criteria contained in the *Urban Levee Design Criteria* are incorporated by reference into the policy-level *Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria*. If levees and floodwalls are being used to provide an urban level of flood protection, they need to meet the *Urban Levee Design Criteria*, unless an exception is approved.

DWR developed the Urban Levee Design Criteria for computing water surface elevations and for designing, constructing, operating, maintaining, and evaluating levees and floodwalls in urban and urbanizing areas. Some of these engineering criteria, such as methods to compute water surface elevations, are applicable for both leveed and unleveed areas.

## Compliance Schedule

Within 36 months after the Central Valley Flood Protection Board adopts the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (scheduled for adoption by July 1, 2012), all cities and counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, as defined in California Government Code §65007(g), will be required to make Findings related to an urban level of flood protection in order to approve development in urban and urbanizing areas located in a flood hazard zone.

While cities and counties located outside the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley are not required to make Findings related to an urban level of flood protection, these draft criteria can help inform engineering and local land use decisions for areas at risk of flooding.

## Potential Implementation Challenges

During the development of the draft criteria, several implementation challenges were identified, resulting in discussions about potential legislative amendments. The current draft criteria reflect the existing legislative requirements. DWR will revise the criteria accordingly after any potential legislative amendments occur.



Counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley